The Redefinition of Identity and the Challenge of Self-Determination in *Ulysses* and *Call It Sleep*

Research Thesis

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Introduction

One of the most significant features of Modernist literature is the role of the consciousness and the internal world of the characters. For this reason, plot within both James Joyce's *Ulysses* and Henry Roth's *Call It Sleep* has meaning only when the identities of the characters in each novel are explored. Who are Stephen Dedalus and Leopold Bloom? There are many answers to this question. They are both Irishmen. Stephen is a Catholic. Bloom is a Jew. Bloom is not a Jew. Bloom is a husband and the father to a dead son. Stephen is a brother and the son to a metaphorically dead father. Who is David Schearl? He is an immigrant, an American, and a Jew. These are just a few of the assumptions the critics have made about Stephen, Bloom, and David. Too often one of these answers is plucked from the list of identities, but do Joyce and Roth create identities that can be composed of such simple terms, which can be completed in a list? Identity in *Ulysses* and *Call It Sleep* is defined not as a feature to be picked out of a list of qualities, but as a fluid and even artistic image of humanity, one that is eternally shifting as the lives and surroundings of the characters change. In this way human identity is just as revolutionized by modernist ideas as literature itself. In the cases of Stephen, Bloom, and David, this is critical in understanding their places in Joyce's and Roth's worlds and their interactions with other individuals in those worlds.

The role of consciousness changed in the twentieth century, especially in literature, by becoming more of a focus in the composition of the stories and images of individuals. With the question of what composed the consciousness and what purpose did it serve came the same question of human identity. In his book, *Mapping Literary Modernism,* Ricardo J. Quinones addresses this question, saying, "Modernism had no prevalent character" (23), "character" carrying the implications of both the conscious mind and identity. Joyce was a major part of this

exploration of consciousness. “The canon of James Joyce enacts a continuous development of his concept of mind,” writes Sheldon Brivic in his book, *Joyce the Creator*, “which is based on Aristotle’s definition of it as the primary organization of knowledge and motivation in a living thing” (3). “Organization of knowledge” describes input, those features that go into the composition of an individual, and “motivation” describes output, the moral decisions that result from the input, the outward expression of the composed identity. These are attributed to the mind which Brivic primarily associates with consciousness but which is also a feature of identity. In discussion of consciousness there is no limitation by categorization. It is not the Irish, Jewish, fatherly, or artistic consciousness, and just as such limitations would undermine the full potentiality of discourse concerning consciousness, so too does it undermine identity, unless it is made clear just what is meant by “identity,” and its purpose in literature.

One example of the treatment of identity as static and restricted is Ira B. Nadel’s essay “Historicizing *Ulysses.*” “To historicize a text is to recognize it as ‘embedded’ in a network of material practices’ and to understand that the literary and nonliterary texts of an era are inseparable,” Nadel writes (136). In this essay, Nadel recognizes what a text may say about the world, but he contradicts himself somewhat in his notes on the text: “The new practice replaces metaphor with history, ambiguity with politics, and discourse analysis with ideological critique to establish interlocking cultural constructions” (Nadel 138). Nadel may be accurate when he writes of these cultural constructions, but in divorcing them from metaphor, ambiguity, and discourse, and other features that compose a text he invalidates his own argument. To establish cultural constructions one must establish any given cultural identity, and these metaphors, ambiguities and discourses are the sources of cultural and all other forms of identity. Nadel is not alone. In Harry Levin’s essay “What Was Modernism?” *Ulysses* is captured as an “encounter

between a sonless father and a fatherless son" (Levin 630). Father and son identities are thrown together here as though it is assumed that the signifiers "father" and "son" have simple meanings.

Colin MacCabe acknowledges the source of identity within the text in his book, *James Joyce and the Revolution of the Word*: "There is no outside to the text where meaning originates before language, rather the text's meanings are constantly being produced in the act of reading: in, that is, the juxtaposition of the discourses of the reader and the text" (86). MacCabe is against the application of simple meanings to signifiers, and this includes the signifiers of identities. "The repetitions mark the text of *Ulysses* as written and allow different meanings to attach to the signifiers" (MacCabe 127). This is not to say that meaning—especially meaning attached to identity—is random or without rules, but rather that the process of establishing meaning is a significant part of the purpose of meaning. Before anything can be said of identities in the world, whether contemporary, in 1922 with the publishing of *Ulysses*, or in 1934 with the publishing of *Call It Sleep*, there must be an understanding of what meaning of identity is produced in the exchange with the reader.

One way this understanding might come about is by approaching identity through the same process that narratologists use in their approach to narrative. In her essay, "Narratology and *Ulysses*," where she explores the recent history of narratological approaches to the text, Margo Norris expresses Mieke Bal's definition: "*Narratology* is the theory of narratives, narrative texts, images, spectacles, events; cultural artifacts that 'tell a story.' Such a theory helps [one] to understand, analyze, and evaluate narratives" (qtd. in Norris 35). For Norris, the story of *Ulysses* is about the process, and for Joyce, identity in *Ulysses* is the same. Norris acknowledges this connection when she writes of critic Erwin R. Steinberg's work with narrative and the

consciousness. The approach to narrative, style, and form in *Ulysses* may be more significant to identity than features that come from the outside. Style is the specific topic for Wolfgang Iser's essay, "Doing Things In Style: An Interpretation of 'The Oxen of the Sun' in James Joyce's *Ulysses,*" where he writes "only by constantly varying the angle of approaches is it possible to convey the potential range of the 'real-life' world, but in literature the 'approach' is what gives rise to the style" (Iser 202).

The identities within *Ulysses* are fluidly interwoven with the text and the result is a fluid construction of identity that is incomplete and often unstable, creating conflicts in the lives of individuals but overall more completely capturing the human experience. This is true for the experience of European modernism, but this definition of identity is made valid in another world by Henry Roth's construction of David Schearl's identity in *Call it Sleep.*

Identity faces a conflict in criticism of *Call It Sleep,* common to that seen in criticism of *Ulysses*. The term *Bildungsroman* is frequently used to describe David's experience. In his essay, " 'The Noisiest Novel ever written': The Soundscape of Henry Roth's *Call It Sleep*," Stephen J. Adams acknowledges Richard J. Fein's approach to this story as one of "the newly arrived immigrant," and a "classic portrayal" (Adams 44). Ruth Wisse accepts identities "mother" and "son" in her approach to *Call It Sleep* as easily as most writers accept "father" and "son" for *Ulysses*. Leslie Fiedler reduces David to "another in that line of firstborn males snatched from the jaws of death" (Fiedler 25). No writer explains this phenomenon better than Hillel Halkin, however. Halkin does not write of Roth's novel, but in his essay, "The Great Jewish Language War" he describes the specific identity of the *talush*, the "lost soul":

> This is characteristically a young Jew who has had a rigorously religious upbringing; experienced heights of adolescent piety; been sent . . . to study at a

> yeshiva . . . lost his faith in God in a crisis of intellectual maturation tat eventually leads to the abandonment of his religious studies and observance; retained, however, amide the emptiness of loss, a fierce sense of Jewish allegiance; and now drifts, a proud and lonely figure, on the margins of Jewish society. (Halkin 52)

It seems that critics have treated this definition far too easily as a way of cementing David's role in the text, of ascribing to him a certain identity without fully knowing all that composes that identity and all the limitless ways it may transform. It is not that any one of these identities is incorrect, but rather that they are each treated far too simply as concrete roles David takes in the world.

Though it is seen by writers like Brian McHale as self-contained, the narration of *Call It Sleep* is just as interwoven with identity as seen in *Ulysses*, and thus a narratological approach to identity is just as valid. In "Linguistic Universes in Henry Roth's *Call It Sleep*," Naomi Diamant comments on narrative: "The narrating self operates by ordering the impressions of the experiencing self, subtly or overtly" (Diamant 338). This is much like Brivic's understanding of consciousness in Joyce's writing, in that the "experiencing self" is the input, the contents that compose identity and the "narrating self" which "operates" is the output, or the assertion of that identity in the form of moral decisions. With a constant flux of experiences and orders, the self can be no more static than its input or output. Here, too, in this novel, identity becomes something fluid and the frame of the *talush* holds a shifting and sometimes unstable image.

The challenge Joyce and Roth create for Stephen, Bloom, and David in their redefinition of identity is both comprehending and accepting the fluid nature of identity and achieving self-determination despite this fluidity. The first step in this process is establishing the relationship

between identity and the text. Joyce and Roth explore this relationship through a redefinition of literature. The two writers have in common an approach to literature that is not static or fixed, but a living force with the potentiality to influence individuals. Literature is fluid and complex, woven and unwoven as it is written and read, and identity is the same. From this approach to identity comes the conflict of weaving a fluid identity into a solid physical world, the next step in self-determination for the characters. Understanding the relationship between the internal and external worlds of the novels is critical in evaluation whether or not the characters achieve self-determination. The social and personal relationships of the characters add a final challenge. As fluid identities are interwoven Stephen, Bloom and David struggle to assert themselves as individuals and the reader must struggle with them to comprehend their identities.

From this idea of identity, there are many other features of the two novels that can be examined: nationality, religion, sexuality, family relationships. The role of Irish nationality in composing Stephen and Bloom's identities may be considered, especially because Stephen and Bloom live in a time when the definition of "Irish" is in a state of flux. The role of sexuality in composing David's identity may be considered as he distances himself from his mother, a figure who is sexualized in "The Cellar," and thus who is experiencing a flux in his concept of sexual identity. Whatever area of identity is studied for any one of these individuals, or any other characters in either novel, the study must not be divorced from metaphor, style, plot, or any other literary quality, for such qualities are necessary in weaving identity.

I. The Redefinition of Identity through the Redefinition of Literature

In "Scylla and Charybdis," Stephen Dedalus discusses literature with his companions, their conversation focused on canonical artists and their critics. Stephen dominates the conversation with his controversial theory about Shakespeare, but his effort goes unrewarded. He is excluded from the group. He is reminded by Mulligan's mockery at the episode's end of his continued failure in developing his identity as a writer. In "Wandering Rocks," Leopold Bloom stumbles across *Sweets of Sin* on a book cart. The arousing images of feminine beauty and the familiar situation of a wife's lover and a cuckolded husband evoke complex emotions in the middle aged advertiser. He walks away from the novel with a new perspective on his own situation and its influence in determining his identity—in this case his identity as a husband. These revelations threaten the typical perspective of pornographic literature.

In a *heder* in New York City, a large blue book sits on a rabbi's shelf. To the rabbi's students, it is a symbol of work. To the rabbi, it is a symbol of his religion with little depth beneath its surface. To David Schearl, it contains stories that will open to him secrets within his own world and opportunities to advance beyond the conflicts of his troubled life.

Joyce and Roth challenge notions of literature common in the nineteenth-century novel, including the approach to literature as static works of art that represent reality. It is not enough for either writer that literature exists. It lives only when it is questioned, scrutinized, mocked, destroyed, and rebuilt. As Colin MacCabe observes in *Ulysses*, "The difficulty of reading Joyce is a difficulty in our notion of reading. Reading for us is passive consumption; with Joyce it becomes an active metamorphosis, a constant displacement in language" (MacCabe 2). This is the purpose of literature in the two novels, for both the characters and the reader. It is not only observed by the characters but it acts on them, influences them, and challenges them to face their

own images. Stephen assists Joyce in presenting a new definition of literature but struggles in his attempt to incorporate that definition into his own identity. Bloom more fluidly interacts with literary texts, and though he is less aware of the significance of literature in establishing identity he more fully supports Joyce's definition in his actions and reactions. David goes beyond the efforts of either of Joyce's heroes and applies his literary experience to the physical world around him so extensively that he is emotionally transformed by literature. Just as Joyce and Roth undermine any static definition of literature, they redefine the identities that literature composes as shifting images, only completed through the acceptance of their inner conflicts as works of art.

Literature is the subject of discussion for Stephen and the subject of exploration for Joyce in "Scylla and Charybdis." In this episode Joyce presents through Stephen's argument his definition of literature. As the characters in the library—including several characters modeled after Irish writers and literary critics, John Eglinton, Russell, Mr Best and the Quaker librarian—battle with Stephen, he derives an argument about the relationship between Shakespeare and the ghost of Hamlet's father. He struggles with his theory, and when asked if he believes it, replies, "No" (9.1067). This response seems to negate Stephen's argument, but in fact draws attention to the significance of the argument because of the process that produces it. This process, explored through dialectic, leads Stephen and Joyce to define literature as fluid, limitless, and interwoven with the lives and identities of individuals.

When Stephen approaches his argument about Shakespeare and King Hamlet, he makes a statement about the fluid nature of literature, the way it is interwoven with the lives of those who write it and those who choose to experience it: "As we, or mother Dana, weave and unweave our bodies. . .so does the artist weave and unweave his image" (9.376). Joyce suggests here through

Stephen that just as the human body is always changing, though its image is seemingly static, so does literature act as something fluid, woven and unwoven, though the ink remains in its places on the page. The reference to "weave and unweave" evokes the image of Penelope, drawing from Joyce's use of the figures of the *Odyssey*. Joyce practices this weaving throughout "Scylla and Charybdis." The narrator describes the librarian in the early lines of the episode: "He came a sinkapace forward on neatsleather creaking and a step backward a sinkapace on the solemn floor" (9.5-6). Joyce uses language and imagery from both *Twelfth Night* and *Julius Caesar* here, before the subject of Shakespeare in the episode has been presented (Gifford 193). This description might be Stephen's, though it has not yet been established that Stephen is present in the scene. The ambiguity of the source of this allusion shows the union the narrator creates between literature as an object in Stephen's life and literature as the subject of the novel. Shakespeare is woven into the text, and as the characters debate throughout the episode, he will be woven in more deeply, and unwoven as his role changes according to each character. The text takes the form of verse (9.684), and later the form of a play (9.893). This type of weaving shows how Joyce approaches literature as a living thing that is able to influence his writing and to influence his characters. As Stephen says, "A man of genius makes no mistakes. His errors are volitional and are the portals of discovery" (9.228-229). Joyce draws from the errors of his characters portals of discovery and opportunity in his own writing.

Joyce has a limitless approach to these opportunities and goes far beyond the efforts of Stephen in his weaving. Joyce's limitless approach to the definition of literature is explored ironically through limitations in narration in "Cyclops." In this episode the text is limited by a first person narrator, who tells of the events that pass between Bloom and the Citizen in Barney Kiernan's pub. The recurring "I" throughout the episode and the narrator's reference to the

"bloody sweep" who "near drove his gear into my eye" (12.2-3) in the beginning of the episode create a Cyclops figure from this voice. This Cyclops cannot accurately tell the story because of the limits in his perspective, the limits faced by any single narrator. One example of the results of these limitations is the confusion over the horse *Throwaway.* After Lenehan's arrival, and after Bloom leaves the pub to see about an ad, the remaining characters discuss Bloom's knowledge of the races, saying Bloom knew of the odds on *Throwaway* and didn't tell them. In fact, this is the result of a subtle confusion in "Lotus Eaters," when Bantam Lyons takes Bloom's newspaper to see about the horses, and Bloom says he can keep it, "I was just going to throw it away" (5.534). Bloom's language is unable to truthfully convey his message to Bantam Lyons, and the Cyclops narrator is unable to truthfully convey the confusion in the events. Joyce illustrates in this confusion the inability of an individual, whether writer or narrator, to accurately tell a complete story. The second narration in this episode comes in various forms of satires. Each satire, much like the Cyclops, presents a one-eyed perspective that misleads the reader. The Citizen is first described in the form of a mock epic, and the figure presented is that of a hero, "broadshouldered deepchested stronglimbed frankeyed redhaired" (12.152-153), *etc*. This presentation of the Citizen is both exaggerated and at times blatantly false, particularly in the description of his "long unsleeved garment of recently flayed oxhide" (12.168). The events of the episode are thrown into further confusion by these interpolations. Within the text of *Ulysses*, Joyce has the answers to each of the puzzles caused by the lack of perspective. He presents the truth behind the mystery of *Throwaway* through Bloom's perspective in "Lotus Eaters." He shows the true nature of the Citizen through the character's dialogue, and within each interpolation he reveals the truth behind the one-eyed message through satire. Within the heroic description of the citizen, Joyce describes, "The widewinged nostrils, from which bristles of the same tawny hue projected, were

of such capaciousness that within their cavernous obscurity the fieldlark might easily have lodged her nest" (12.158-161). This description is both comic and deeply exaggerated, drawing attention to the inaccuracies in the interpolation as a whole and revealing the Citizen as an aggressive and limited figure. Joyce debunks the limits of literature in a way that Stephen, though agreeing with the definition in "Scylla and Charybdis," cannot. Despite the presence of these limitations, Bloom asserts his identity in "Cyclops," and in the face of some of the greatest limitations Joyce is able to remove the limits on Bloom's capabilities.

Stephen's inability to live by the definition of literature he and Joyce create is detrimental to his odyssey to fulfill his identity. At the heart of Stephen's argument in "Scylla and Charybdis" is the connection between William Shakespeare, the artist, and the character of the ghost, the image. Stephen's description of the weaving and unweaving of the artist and the image is part of this argument, but is not true for Stephen's approach to his own work. In "Proteus," Stephen wanders on the beach, caught in his own thoughts, and the majority of the episode is focused on the whirlpool in Stephen's mind. The construction of this whirlpool includes Stephen's monologues, elaborate thoughts constructed by him in first person, such as the early contemplation of his walk: "I am, a stride at a time. A very short space of time through very short times of space" (3.11-12). Interrupting these monologues are the voices of others, including Stephen's father, "Did you see anything of your artist brother Stephen lately" (3.62-63), his uncle Richie, and the imagined praise of people who have read his imaginary writing, "Have you read his F? O yes, but I prefer Q. Yes, but W is wonderful" (3.139-140). In "Wandering Rocks," Stephen describes this as "the throb always within" (10.823), and his challenge as a creator of literature is to draw from this throb some truth about himself or the world, to compose some art form from it, thus fulfilling Joyce's definition. This is very much like the challenge Joyce faces

in “Cyclops,” creating a significant moment for Bloom from the chaos of treacherous voices, and where Joyce succeeds, Stephen fails. Rather than drawing from all the voices, Stephen resists. Brivic suggests that the separation leads to Stephen’s immersion into the text as he takes over the role of the narrator for the novel’s second half. The problem with this theory is that Stephen still retains immaturity as a writer, as the poem he composes in “Proteus” shows. He does not see his work as fluidly interwoven with his identity but holds it apart, and the result of his effort is a few weak lines: “He comes, pale vampire, through storm his eyes, his bat sails bloodying the sea, mouth to her mouth’s kiss” (3.397-398). Stephen constructs from these thoughts this poem that appears throughout the novel as he attempts to cling to its potentiality. The poem is eventually swept away by Joyce’s fluid literary approach.

One version of Stephen’s poem is presented in “Aeolus,” though it is not spoken or read by anyone but recited in Stephen’s mind. “*On swift sail flaming / From storm and south / He comes, pale vampire, / Mouth to my mouth*” (7.522-525). This is Stephen’s contribution to literature, but it is isolated from his identity and he questions it, saying in “Aeolus” before reciting the poem, “Bit torn off” (7.519). He equates the poem with a “bit” and recites the poem only in his mind. He later thinks about the poem again: “Would anyone wish that mouth for her kiss? How do you know? Why did you write it then?” (7.711-12). This final question shows the difference between Stephen and Joyce’s approaches to literature. Stephen, when thinking of the poem as a failure, concludes that he shouldn’t have bothered to write it. His interest is only in a completed successful work and not in the writing process and the insights it can bring him. The “errors” he speaks of in “Scylla and Charybdis” are not, for him, “portals of discovery” (9.228-229), but simply errors, and thus the poem is very likely tossed aside, as Bloom, walking along Stephen’s beach, will later find a discarded piece of paper (13.1246). In “Oxen of the Sun,”

Stephen quotes his poem in discussing possible forms of conception, "by potency of vampires mouth to mouth" (14.243-244). He clings to these fragile words while in the narration Joyce critiques literature in its entire Anglo-Saxon history. The minuteness of Stephen's contribution in the face of Joyce's storm of language shows the limits that Stephen imposes on himself.

Though Stephen's words may help Joyce define literature, his actions are not consistent with his ideas. In "Scylla and Charybdis," Stephen briefly displays the Joycean definition of literature that he describes, as John Eglinton says, "He will have it that *Hamlet* is a ghoststory" (9.141). Stephen's response is not verbal, but internal, as he reacts to the cry of Hamlet's father, "*List! List! O list!*" with "My flesh hears him: creeping, hears" (9.144-145). This movement of the flesh through the evoked literary passage is the type of weaving of truth, literature and identity that Joyce seeks. Perhaps Stephen is thinking of the ghost of his own mother, who haunts him throughout the novel, and thus the truth of his own experience is woven together with Shakespeare's words. Stephen has stepped away briefly from his sterile ideas into a more active relationship with literature, one that is not about the distinction between canonized and popular literature, but rather that is about finding some truth in his identity. The brevity of Stephen's insights here is reflected by his general absence in the episodes that follow. After his brief presence in "Wandering Rocks," Stephen's role in the novel is minimal compared to Bloom's. Bloom, meanwhile, though he shows less interest in literature as a whole, presents an approach that is more in keeping with Joyce's definition.

Bloom's encounters with literature differ greatly from Stephen's primarily because he is not a writer and thus is less attentive to literature. Bloom's lack of intellect may make him less similar to Joyce than Stephen, but it also puts him in a position with fewer reservations and thus fewer restrictions in his approach to literature. The role of literature in Bloom's life is established

in “Calypso”: “He tore away half the prize story sharply and wiped himself with it” (4.537). Bloom reads the prize story but immediately after reduces it to trash. This is counter to the way Stephen clings to his theory of Shakespeare and clings to the poem he writes. Stephen connects literature to immortality, while Bloom thinks, in examining a newspaper, “Inked characters fast fading on the frayed breaking paper” (6.160). Bloom presents the written word as fragile. This seems to be in contrast to Joyce’s definition of literature as fluid, limitless and possessing some fragment of the characters’ identities. In fact, Bloom’s challenge of literature is in keeping with Joyce’s criticism. It is not enough for Bloom that literature exists, written or published by a name that holds authority. Bloom seeks literature that can interact with him, especially when it influences his perspective of his identity and the decisions he will make.

Joyce’s definition of literature shows in Bloom’s examination of *Sweets of Sin*. As Bloom reads the novel in “Wandering Rocks,” he experiences the words: “Warmth showered gently over him, cowing his flesh. Flesh yielded amply amid rumpled clothes: whites of eyes swooning up. His nostrils arched themselves for prey” (10.619-621). This is much like Stephen’s experience of creeping flesh in response to Shakespeare’s words. Bloom is able to identify with the situation presented in the novel and the conflicted effects such a situation has on choices and emotions. Bloom’s thoughts here are particularly significant because it is ambiguous which images are his and which are from the book. His eyes are most likely not rolling up, but are his nostrils arching? Is he searching for prey, in searching for a book, or is it the character in *Sweets of Sin*? Bloom’s identity has fluidly been woven together with the book. He is thus acting out the definition that Stephen and Joyce present in “Scylla and Charybdis,” and is doing so reading a pornographic novel.

This interaction with popular literature does not necessarily make the claim that *Sweets of Sin* is a good example of literature, but rather that good literature cannot be found with a sterile approach, that its quality is dependent on the ways it is woven into the life of the person experiencing it. Bloom finds a shred of potentiality in *Sweets of Sin*, thus opening him to a more active search for literature as a whole. Joyce himself takes this approach. In the early publication of the novel serially, "Nausicaa" was considered sexually obscene enough to have *Ulysses* discontinued (Ellmann 502-503). This is the type of approach to defining literature that Joyce resists. "Nausicaa" was judged based on its content and not its connection to the truth of the identities it presents. Stephen seeks immortality and recognition in literature, while Bloom simply seeks truth, and just as he finds a small bit of truth in *Sweets of Sin*, Bloom's masturbation in "Nausicaa" explores a significant decision, without which the portrait of his identity would be incomplete.

In contrast to the failure of Stephen's poem, Joyce presents a poem written by Bloom that though it isn't perfect is more fully interwoven with his identity. In "Ithaca," as Bloom sits with Stephen and assumes that Stephen is internally composing poetry, he remembers a poem he once composed for Molly that shows the union between his and Joyce's approaches to literature. He begins by addressing the concept of literature, "*Poets oft have sung in rhyme / Of music sweet their praise divine*" (17.412-413). Bloom's poem goes on to undermine the value of such literature in his life, saying, "*Let them hymn it nine times nine. / Dearer far than song or wine. / You are mine. The world is mine*" (17.414-416). Bloom's poem is intertwined with his own life and emotions. He shows that the value of his poem, as opposed to the poetry he mentions in the first lines, is the relationship between his poem and his own love for Molly. Furthermore, in equating "*You*" and "*The world*" he addresses the relationship between individual identity and

physical reality in a way similar to Joyce's approach. The distinction between literature and life that Bloom makes is true for Stephen's poem from "Proteus," which comes about through separateness between the artist and the image. Bloom is woven into his poem, even so far as the first letters of each line spelling out Molly's nickname for him, Poldy. The poem may have little value as a work of art—outside of its relevance to Bloom and Molly, it is not a particularly good poem—but Bloom recognizes this, for he only keeps it in the context for which it was written. He doesn't cling to it, like Stephen clings to his poem, but allows it to remain a part of his past and reflects on the image of his identity it presents.

Joyce's definition of literature as fluid and limitless, and the way he weaves together literature and identity reveals his rebellion against conventional ideas of identity as isolated, individual and static. Stephen says, "so does the artist weave and unweave his image" (9.377), but the meaning of "image" is ambiguous, the possibilities being the work of art that the artist is creating and the image of the artist. This ambiguity unites the two meanings of the image, and just as Joyce and Stephen imagine the weaving and unweaving of the body and the weaving and unweaving of the text, so are the artist and his identity woven together. The identity is thus just as fluid and limitless as literature. This relationship with identity is why Stephen can identify with a passage about a ghost, as his own mother looms in his mind, and why Bloom can identify with the excessive emotion in *Sweets of Sin*, as his own emotions are tormented by the upcoming meeting between Molly and her lover, Blazes Boylan. Joyce expresses the limitless opportunities of identity through literature most explicitly in "Circe," as literature provides physical presence and authority for identity. Bloom's exploration of his identity in this episode moves fluidly into and out of hallucinations. This stands in contrast to Stephen's resistance to the image of his

mother and his inability to embrace the authority that creativity has given to his identity. Just as Stephen's definition of literature is limited, so is his exploration of identity.

The subject of literature may seem like something that *Call It Sleep* lacks by comparison to *Ulysses.* The novel opens on a very young David Schearl, for whom reading is still something new that occurs only in school. In general, literature is absent from his world—for his parents, the experience of literature never exceeds the Yiddish newspaper. According to a conventional definition of fiction, there is no literature in David's story, but Roth, who was greatly influenced by *Ulysses* (McHale 75), has a definition of literature in keeping with Joyce's, and David is exposed not to canonized modernist works but rather literature in the form of a religious text. In this way Roth brings European Modernism to the American ghetto, making the influence of literature accessible to David. Through David's self-exploration and understanding of the story of Isaiah, Roth presents a definition of literature much like Joyce's, one that is focused less on titles or content and more on the authority literature takes when interwoven wit the identity of those who choose to read it.

The definition of literature against which Roth rebels is presented by him through the characters of Bertha and Rabbi Pankower. In "The Picture," Bertha opposes a type of literature and an approach to literature that she sees as futile at best, harmful at worst. Bertha and Genya discuss whether or not they believe in love and Bertha accuses Genya of reading "every German Romance in Austria" (165). Bertha's approach is not positive. "They were bad for you," she says, and accuses them of giving Genya "strange notions" (165). Bertha observes that the Romances served as a barrier between Genya and reality, and thus expresses distaste for this approach to literature. She acknowledges the lack of truth in such literature and thus its harmful effects. She describes "a cloudy look" (165) and accuses the books of impairing Genya's ability

to make decisions, rather than enlightening her and increasing her knowledge of her own life. In some ways the definition of literature that Roth and Bertha rebel against is similar to the rabbi's definition of religious texts in "The Coal." He tells David, when commanding him to recite the sounds of Hebrew, "Show me how blessed is your understanding" (217). Understanding is thus not a connection between the text or the reader but simply a sign that the reader can follow the words in a disconnected way. This approach to religion is reflected by the disinterestedness of David's fellow students, who care little for what happens in *heder* outside of the exchanging of pointers. These similar definitions of literature and religion come under scrutiny in "The Coal." This is a typical approach to religious texts in the *heder* and is the source of David's understanding of both literature and Judaism.

Arriving early at the *heder* one day, David hears a translation of one of the stories Pankower teaches to an older student, and his interest in reading Hebrew increases almost to the point of obsession as he is enthralled by the story. David's interest is first aroused by the mention of God, a being often referenced but never explained in his household. He is then most engaged by those passages he relates to, as Pankower reads, "But when Isaiah saw the Almighty in His majesty and His terrible light—Woe me! He cried, What shall I do! I am lost! . . . I, common man, have seen the Almighty, I, unclean one have seen him!" (227). David fixates on the words "Clean" and "Light" (227), a contrast to the darkness of the cellar and the uncleanliness of sexuality that he had experienced before. He connects his own identity to the words and thus becomes obsessed with the possibility of overcoming his identity conflict through Isaiah's message. Pankower then describes the coal touching the lips of Isaiah to clean them, and this image remains in David's mind, though its meaning is not quite clear to him. David lacks any authority figure with interest in explaining the metaphor of the coal to him and is left to decipher

it for himself. In his error in grasping the concept of metaphor, though it may seem like childlike naivety, David embodies the life within literature that is present in Joyce and Roth's definitions.

The story of the coal resonates with David in the days that follow the lesson and he weaves it into his life in a childlike way that focuses on the physical manifestations of the ideas in the story. Upon lighting a lamp for an old woman as the Sabbath approaches, David is aware of the sin, the uncleanliness, and imagines that the penny she gives him is tainted, referring to it as the "sin penny" (238). David's preoccupation with these thoughts overwhelms him as he sits by the river and falls into a sort of trance. Watching the light reflect off the water, "Fire on the water. White" (247), he fixates on it and associates it with the description of God from the passage, and the description given him by Genya: "In the water she said. White. Brighter than day. Whiter" (247). What appears as problematic in David's approach, in his search for God in the river, or for sin in the penny, is the attribution of meaning in the objects instead of the ideas. Hana Wirth-Nesher describes, "For the child protagonist David Schearl, language and literacy are entangled with holiness, transgression and desecration" (77). The key word here is "entangled." There is no order or logic in David's approach—rather than finding truth in the river, he almost falls in. He still understands literature as relevant only as it appears in the physical world. This error is one typical for his age, as abstract concepts are still often out of his reach, and though it is an error it is also what Stephen might call a portal of discovery as David's application of the error in his experience at the rail leads him to an epiphany.

When David plunges the zinc sword into the crack to reach the rail he finds a more extreme connection to the text as he is overcome by "a paw ripping through all the stable fibres of the earth, power, gigantic, fetterless, thudded into day" (253). David flees from the scene, startled and "weak with fright" (254), and though his immediate reaction is one of fear, as he

calms down and lets his thoughts wander they weave together with the language of the story. He listens to the rhythm of chopping nearby and thinks, "In the dark, in the hallways, was there. In the dark, in the cellars was there. Where cellars is locked, where cellars is coal, where cellars is coal, is –Coal! –Coal! He sat bolt upright" (255). David makes the connection that the light within the rail is somehow the coal from the story, the light of God, crying, "Is coal under! White!" (255). His actions resemble the shattering of the chandelier by Stephen in "Circe," and he has in common the observance of the symbolism in the event, but he goes further, choosing to act on it. He runs to the *heder*, physically to reach the story, wanting to complete the connection with the image that first evoked it. The rabbi is annoyed by David, stating the obvious: "Go beat your head on a wall! God's light is not between car-tracks" (257). Pankower is correct, of course. Electricity is between car tracks. The significance of David's discovery is not in his childlike mistakes, but in his reaction when he takes his experience back to the story and brings together transformation of identity and literature.

Upon connecting the story to his experience, David returns to the *heder*, searching for the book. The rabbi allows David to read again, and knowing some of the meaning behind the sounds David reacts dramatically to the symbols. He sees them as moving objects with agency, saying, "They were growing funny" (258), as though they changed their shapes on the page. After he reads, David "screamed till his eyes and his drawers were wet, screamed till he could no longer stand, but screaming slumped to the floor and rolled from side to side" (259). This expulsion of laughter, tears, and urine is cathartic, and the question remains if this is an emotional release for David, what is he releasing, and what is absent from him after the release? David's emotional state after the catharsis is described, "All laughter had gone from him and all tears with it, and now only a deep untroubled gentleness was left, a worldless faith, a fixity,

mellow and benign" (260). David lacks the fear that plagued him before. The tension that followed him under the constant gaze of his father has finally broken. David is imagining the concepts that caused this release after the fact, thinking, "Better is inside. Can carry it" (261), referring to the light. This understanding of internal light shows the beginning of a grasp of the concept of literature as the source of internal peace. It is just the beginning, but is nonetheless significant as David takes the definition of literature as fluidly interwoven into human life a step further than Stephen or Bloom. Where Stephen holds literature apart from his life, and Bloom seeks literature as a new perspective of his life, David uses what he learns through literature to make decisions in his life and in "The Coal" in particular, David's understanding of the story behind the Hebrew characters leads him to choose a more peaceful existence.

Through the redefinition of literature, Joyce and Roth redefine identity and the nature and purpose of the identity search. In "What Was Modernism," Harry Levin observes, "What [fiction] possesses that non-fiction lacks is fantasy—that is to say, the projective power of the imagination, which confers value and significance on the stuff of our everyday apprehension by rearranging and transmuting it" (Levin 625). As works of fiction, *Ulysses* and *Call It Sleep* serve this purpose for the reader, but within the novels, fiction serves the same purpose for Stephen, Bloom, and David. Both literature and identity are fluidly woven together in a relationship that is continuously changing and, when embraced and understood, limitless. Understanding this new definition becomes critical for each character and it is through the resistance of weaving and unweaving literature into his life that Stephen fails in his search where Bloom and David succeed.

II. Fluid Identity in a Static Physical World

The fluidity of identity experienced by the characters of *Ulysses* and *Call It Sleep* presents a conflict when those identities come into contact with the physical worlds created by the writers. In "Scylla and Charybdis," Stephen notes this conflict, describing, "As we, or mother Dana, weave and unweave our bodies" (9.376). Stephen is referring to the constant movement of molecules within the human body, the result of which is the constant changing of the individual. "And as the mole on my right breast is where it was when I was born, though all my body has been woven of new stuff time after time, so through the ghost of the unquiet father the image of the unliving son looks forth" (9.378-381). The body is new, but identical to what it was before. Stephen is able to use this conflict well in his argument about Shakespeare, but in the context of the lives of the characters of the two novels the solution is not as simple. For David Schearl the situation is both further complicated and less easily articulated as his childlike perspective of the world fluctuates between varying degrees of fragility. He experiences the complexity between his internal and external worlds as a physical threat.

The idea of a limitless and fluid identity, interwoven with creative forms like literature, is complicated by the interaction between individuals with these identities and the idea of a static physical world. In *Joyce the Creator,* Sheldon Brivic explores the ideas of Jacques Lacan, saying, "If metaphor is the substance of mind, then it is notable that metaphor has two aspects, usually a concrete one and an abstract one" (Brivic 4). The complex relationship between the "concrete" and "abstract" creates a challenge for both the writers and the characters of the two novels. The challenge for the writers in this relationship is presenting a solid physical world when it is perceived by fluid and conflicting identities. The challenge for the characters, Stephen, Bloom and David, is how to assert an identity that seems fragile and unstable in this

environment. In Joyce's approach to this conflict, language gains authority over reality as the identities he creates permeate throughout his physical world. In this approach Stephen blunders as he struggles to keep his worlds separate, while Bloom embraces what is often a chaotic union and progresses. In Roth's approach to the conflict, David struggles to draw lines between his internal and external worlds, and though this struggle sometimes ends in mistakes in his understanding of the world it also opens him to new opportunities to understand meaning, especially in his perception of his identity.

Identity is not like the human body in Joyce's definition. It is not solid or static and thus its placement in the world of *Ulysses* defies the limits of the placement of the physical body. In "What Was Modernism?" Harry Levin observes a challenge this discrepancy between identity and body may present: "In the novel, as Naturalism had left it, the environment came dangerously close to swamping the personages" (Levin 624). This is the case in part because the environment is saturated with identities that permeate their surroundings, often through use of language. Each character in *Ulysses* is definable by certain connections to language. At the end of "Wandering Rocks," when Almidano Artifoni bumps into the blind stripling, the stripling yells, "God's curse on you . . . you bitch's bastard" (10.1119-1120). In "Sirens," after the stripling has tuned a piano in the bar where Bloom sits listening to music the remaining characters in the bar discuss the stripling, and after their words comes the sentence, "God's curse on bitch's bastard" (11.285). No character says these words. It is ambiguous whether or not they are part of Bloom's or anyone else's thoughts. The narrator has remembered the connection between the stripling's identity and this exclamation and as the stripling's identity is made present through the conversation so this piece of his identity is made present in the text. This

relationship between the narrator and the stripling shows the potentiality of identity to be asserted through language.

The authority that language holds over reality, especially when that authority is exercised by the narrator, sometimes makes the events of *Ulysses* chaotic, creating scenarios that conflict the relationship between the characters and reality. The apparition of the dead is one such form the conflict takes. Paddy Dignam's funeral in "Hades" is the source of much of Bloom's thought on transmigration, or the movement of the soul into another body. Dignam returns briefly from the grave in "Cyclops" to talk to the men in the pub who were discussing him. The presence of Dignam in the pub amongst people who are very much alive is an example of something like transmigration, the recurring presence of a soul, and is a quality of identity in the present physical world. Dignam's appearance in "Cyclops" follows an argument between Alf Bergan and the other men over whether or not Dignam is actually dead. Alf claims he is not, insisting, "Sure I'm after seeing him not five minutes ago" (12.323). It seems ridiculous for Joyce to agree with Alf in this argument, for Alf couldn't have seen the deceased Dignam, but after the argument Joyce explores this possibility by presenting the ghost of Dignam. After the apparition Joyce draws attention to the possibility, and the impossibility: "He is gone from mortal haunts: O'Dignam, sun of our morning" (12.374). The pun on "sun" and "morning" shows the fallibility and mistakes of language. Such mistakes allow the influence of Dignam's identity on other characters, as though present. Stephen addresses this phenomenon in "Scylla and Charybdis" when he asks, "What is a ghost?. . .One who has faded into impalpability through death, through absence, through change of manners" (9.147-149). This apparition of an absent identity into the text further shows the complex role of identity in the physical world and the ways an individual with a fluid identity may succeed in self determination.

Stephen and Bloom both experience this struggle between identity and reality, and throughout their odysseys it weaves them together as the narrator blends their identities in each near encounter. In "Aeolus," Bloom observes early in the episode while looking at another character, "Fat folds of neck, fat, neck, fat, neck" (7.48). Later, when Bloom is absent from the scene and Stephen's thoughts dominate the narration, Stephen observes "The loose flesh of his neck shook like a cock's wattles" (7.663). This is a Bloom-like observation, reflecting Bloom's identity, and only after it appears does the narrator reveal that Bloom is on the telephone. The presence of Bloom's identity comes through the telephone, into the scene, into Stephen's thoughts. This is an internal usurping. An external usurping occurs when Bloom is on the beach in "Nausicaa," the beach of Stephen's "Proteus," and sees "a piece of paper on the strand" (13.1246). Though there is a play on improbabilities here, the events Joyce presents are not impossible and don't even stray too far from realism. The thought might've been the narrator's rather than Stephen's, the paper might've been a random bit of trash, the ship Stephen sees might not ever come near Bloom's throwaway. These moments of improbability serve a significant purpose in retrieving identity in objects of the physical world. Bloom observes, tossing a stick on the strand, "He flung his wooden pen away. The stick fell in silted sand, stuck. Now if you were trying to do that for a week on end you couldn't" (13.1270-1271). Joyce uses the narrator to construct these moments when the wooden pen sticks, when an improbable and even impossible event in the physical world is given meaning through its connection to identity. Brivic describes this form of union between the two characters: "In *Ulysses*, two people, Stephen Dedalus and Leopold Bloom, come into contact with a mind that unites them, an extraindividual or multipersonal mind" (Brivic 5). Brivic claims this "mind" is Joyce's, and though that is a possibility, within the text the "mind" takes the form of language itself, through the narrator.

This method of using the narrator as the source of improbable moments leads to a restriction of freedom in the odysseys of each character and they are left with the challenge of asserting their identity.

Despite the interweaving of the two characters, Stephen and Bloom react differently to their relationship with the physical world, seen most clearly in "Circe." Conflicts caused by the narrator's control over the relationship between identity and the physical world are most evident in this episode as Joyce shows internal transformation externally through the narrator's stage directions and reveals each character's struggle through hallucinations. Stephen acknowledges Joyce's approach early in the episode while talking to Lynch: "So that gesture, not music not odour, would be a universal language, the gift of tongues rendering visible not the lay sense but the first entelechy, the structural rhythm" (15.105-107). Stephen's explanation is much like the purpose of the hallucinations, to build a more direct link between the internal world, including identity, and the external world. For Bloom, this link reveals several waves of battles with his identity as he faces the sins of his past in the forms of his grandfather Virag and former love interests. He also faces his current dilemma of Molly's infidelity. Bloom is physically transformed into a woman at one point and though this is an unpleasant experience for him, as he is degraded and abused, it is also an opportunity for him to better understand his moral choices and his own identity. Bloom's hallucinations lack any concrete conclusion but his advancement through them shows his tendency to weave his experiences and his identity together to more fully understand himself. This is very different from Stephen who lacks Bloom's extreme submersion and when faced with the image of his mother, a crucial part of his identity, he flees. Stephen is aware of the opportunity creativity presents, particularly through language, to overcome the physical restrictions in his identity, such as poverty, religion and Irish nationality,

and to achieve self-determination. He acknowledges the potential authority of language over reality in "Nestor," as he observes a book of sums. "Across the page the symbols moved in grave morrice, in the mummery of their letters, wearing quaint caps of squares and cubes….a darkness shining in brightness which brightness could not comprehend" (2.155-160). Stephen ties this authority of language to minds like "Averroes" and "Moses Maimonides, dark men in mien and movement" (2.158-159). Stephen physically identifies with "dark men," dressed in mourning, and internally burdened with his guilt over his mother's death and his failures as a writer. He connects himself to great minds and their use of language and other means of struggling towards creation. In "Proteus," Stephen challenges the capabilities of language and attempts to use it as a means of first internal then external creation. Before he writes the poem at the episode's end, Stephen's doubt and restrictions appear in the form of a second person voice conflicting with his first person narration. The second person voice of "Proteus" is derogatory and judgmental, saying of Stephen, "You were going to do wonders, what?" (3.192) and "He saved men from drowning and you shake at a cur's yelping" (3.317-319). These thoughts hinder Stephen's ability to produce anything with his internal monologues. The consistent interruptions of his self-loathing in the form of this voice inhibit his self-determination.

Stephen's inability to achieve self-determination in the conflict between his fluid identity and the novel's unstable setting is the result of his inability to find harmony between the many pieces of his identity, just as he cannot find harmony between his identity and literature. In "Ithaca," after Bloom "rose and carried the iron kettle to the sink in order to tap the current by turning the faucet to let it flow" (17.161-162) the narrator asks, "What in water did Bloom, waterlover, drawer of water, watercarrier, returning to the range, admire?" (17.183-184).The narration opens into a forty-three line exploration of all the properties and abilities of water. This

includes “whirlpools” (17.207) alluding to Ulysses’ advancement beyond Charybdis, “its persevering penetrativeness” (17.213-214), such as a perseverance to penetrate identity beyond the usurping force of the narrator, and “its solidity in glaciers, icebergs, icefloes” (17.220), an expression of strength. The observation of this phenomenon is only Bloom’s, however, for Stephen distrusts “aquacities of thought and language” (17.240). Stephen’s resistance to these qualities of water is consistent with his weaknesses throughout the novel. He may present acquacities of language but does not submit himself to them. This shows in “Wandering Rocks” when Stephen is contemplating the relationship between the physical world and his identity and he thinks, “Throb always without you and the throb always within. . . I between them. Where? Between two roaring worlds where they swirl, I. Shatter them, one and both” (10.822-825). Stephen recognizes the fluidity of both internal and external worlds, saying they both “swirl,” but cannot reconcile himself to this nature. Shortly after this though Stephen experiences a conflict with the physical world when he meets his sister, Dilly, and is startled by the interaction. Just as he separates his life and literature, Stephen attempts to separate his identity from Dilly’s. Resisting the natural interweaving, Stephen is unable to advance in his odyssey.

Bloom is more successful in his approach to the conflict between his internal and external worlds, in part because he does not join Stephen’s struggle to keep the two worlds separate despite the chaos their union creates. Bloom’s openness to the union of his fluid identity and the physical world shows in his awareness of physical creation, including writing. Bloom pays close attention to the printing machines in “Aeolus.” He equates the motion of the machines with human life, thinking of a body: “Machines. Smash a man to atoms if they got him caught. Rule the world today. His machineries are pegging away too. . . Working away, tearing away” (7.80-3). The next headline reads, “HOW A GREAT DAILY ORGAN IS TURNED OUT” (7.84). The body is

first equated with the printing machines, part of the process of writing, then is "turned out," made a result of the writing process. Bloom imagines the human body as the medium on which the newspaper is printed with the possibility of falling into the machine: "Now if he got paralysed there and no-one knew how to stop them they'd clank on and on the same, print it over and over and up and back" (7.101-3). After his observation Bloom becomes preoccupied with writing, creating an advertisement, experimenting with words and design. He carefully observes a typesetter: "Want to be sure of his spelling" (7. 165). Bloom's awareness of the writing process creates a bridge between his internal identity and external surroundings that allows him to construct a place for himself in the world. In "Sirens," Bloom exercises this construction, writing a letter to Martha and becoming Henry Flower, even using the language "But Henry wrote" rather than referring to his writing self as Bloom (11.888). Bloom's approach to creation, though he doesn't identify as an artist, is more complete than Stephen's because it lacks any personal restrictions.

In "Aeolus," Stephen predicts, "that it was that small act, trivial in itself, that striking of that match, that determined the whole aftercourse of both our lives" (7.763-765). This prediction is fulfilled in "Ithaca" as he and Bloom sit together in the dark and find the chance of creating a physical bond. The match represents the physical union of the two individuals for Stephen, but it is after the opportunity of the match that this union fails. In the end, Bloom remains in his home, while Stephen continues to wander. This difference shows that Bloom finds harmony between his fluid identity and the physical world, asserting a complete and fluid self from the chaotic sources that compose him. Stephen's inability to stop the movement shows his attachment to it, just as his inability to fully submit himself to the hallucinations of "Circe" show his lack of interaction between his internal and external worlds. The role of this relationship between

Stephen and Bloom is explored by David Daiches in his essay, "James Joyce: the Artist as Exile": "*Ulysses* is the description of a limited number of events concerning a limited number of people in a limited environment—Dublin. Yet Joyce must make Dublin into a microcosm of the world so that he can raise his distance from the city into an esthetic attitude" (Daiches 67). Despite the failure of Stephen and Bloom's union, and despite Stephen's continued wandering at the novel's end, the relationship that Joyce has established with the two characters between identity and reality serves as a "microcosm of the world." In *Call It Sleep,* the esthetic attitude continues as Roth's characters experience the same conflict between worlds as seen in *Ulysses.*

The conflict between inner and outer worlds that Stephen and Bloom experience is deeply exaggerated when that conflict is experienced by a boy too young to grasp reality or to know the lines between one reality or another. Much of the chaos of *Call It Sleep* comes from David's perspective of the physical world as a fluid place, and of his inner world as a physical place, an approach made more chaotic for its setting as Sam Girgus acknowledges in *The New Covenant*: "The city in the myth is an urban wilderness of violence, danger, and corruption, but it also can be a place of opportunity for the aggressive, ambitious, and intelligent" (Girgus 18). It is in this environment that David must find self-determination. Perhaps it is not a coincidence that the first book, "The Cellar," evokes the metaphor of water created in "Ithaca" as it opens on David's observation of "the bright brass faucets that gleamed so far away" (17). David wonders, "Where did the water come from that lurked so secretly in the curve of the brass? Where did it go, gurgling in the drain?" questioning both the construction and movement of the physical world. It is separate from him, both from his knowledge and from his physical body as he can't reach the faucet to turn it on. David notices "that this world had been created without thought of

him" (17). As David interacts with this physical world he faces the challenge of asserting his identity despite the lack of thought of him.

David struggles to achieve self-determination in situations of physical crisis as he is unable to separate the physical crisis with the construction of his inner world. He experiences an absence of control when his father's identity overwhelms his thoughts causing physical paralysis and what David experiences as "Terrific absorption" (83). His fear of his father is not outward, towards the image of the man, but rather intertwined with his understanding of himself. He first expresses this at the dinner table, "cautiously peering up furtively from time to time to see whether anything he did was displeasing his father" (75). David is less concerned about the act of scolding and more about his father's emotions. This projection of his father's perspective onto David is more explicit in their moment of crisis. Upon the appearance of Albert, after David strikes Yussie and Yussie screams, David is absorbed into the image of Albert's face. "With every word he uttered his lips became thinner and more rigid. His face to David seemed slowly to recede, but recede without diminishing, growing more livid with distance, a white flame bodiless" (83). David's perspective is torn as he simultaneously attempts to distance himself from the image, pushing it away, and to attach himself to it, absorbing its detail. The same sensation follows Albert's speech. He tells David, "'Answer me'" (83) and David's thoughts echo, "Answer me, his words rang out. Answer me, but they meant, Despair" (83). He repeats his father's words twice and translates them into his own interpretation, all the while paralyzed and unable to respond. He watches his father's hand, thinking, "Terrific clarity was given him. Terrific leisure. Transfixed, timeless, he studied the curling fingers that twitched spasmodically" (83). This describes absorption of his physical being into his father's hand, and absorption of any sense of an individual identity into his father's accusations. Throughout the scene they symbol of

the hammer resonates, instilled by a rumor of Albert that David hears early in the novel, as it does in other scenes of conflict. The attachment to this symbolism serves as a continued connection between Stephen and David, but it is far greater for David because he does not separate the symbol from reality.

As David advances in his experiences he learns more about separating his identity from the identities of others and using it to help him construct his perception of reality. After the beating David exercises new freedom by wandering away from his neighborhood and getting lost. David's thoughts acquire a narrator-like quality that shows his role as creator, a role that thrives in the new environment of the surrounding neighborhoods as he follows the telegraph poles. "They go way and away" (93) he thinks, anxious to follow, despite his attachment to his mother and his home. David's literary creativity shows when he names the telephone poles, "Mr. High Wood" (93), a signifier that will remain with him throughout the novel. He observes, "the black talons of crooked trees clawed at the slippery ground" (94). This use of metaphor may be the narrator's but the frightening approach to the sight of the tree reflects David's voice. When observing the way the clouds meet the horizon before him and turning to find another horizon behind him David wonders, "Funny. Both ways. . . Like it was a swing" (94). He focuses on dualities around him, even as an argument takes place within his mind: "—Time to look back. / —No" (94). The "swing" in the Earth's curve is reflected by David's indecision. David thrives in the union of his internal world and this physical world, though when he loses control over his physical situation, he also loses control over his observation and internal narration. In "The Picture," David applies this constructive relationship between his thoughts and the world around him to Bertha and Genya's speech, as he learns to create a story from pieces of their words. One result of this is his new awareness of the picture that Genya has bought and its connection to her

past. David's lack of freedom as a result of a language barrier restricts him here as he observes, "But though he pried here, there, everywhere among the gutturals and surds striving with all his power to split the stubborn scales of speech, he could not" (195-196). Despite his failure in this particular attempt, David is gaining agency overall in his understanding of the physical world.

David's reliance upon the physical world shows in the way he draws his thought process from the visible world, in an act almost opposite to Stephen's approach in "Proteus" of shutting his eyes. This reliance is at times limiting, but also serves as an opportunity for self-exploration. Naomi Diamant observes the role of metaphor in this exploration: "In his pursuit of the knowledge necessary for him to feel at home in his environment, metaphor plays a central role, enabling connections to be forged between the known and the unknown in David's consciousness" (Diamant 337). The challenge for David is to avoid confusion in these connections. In "The Coal," in a scene reminiscent of "Proteus," David sits by the river, experiencing introspection as he transforms the sight of the water into thoughts. Because he is focusing on the unstable surface of the water, reality seems to undergo a metamorphosis. "In the molten sheen memories and objects overlapped" (247). David allows the shifting physical world to reflect memories and thoughts back to him. The first images he notices are the bridges spanning the river, "Like that sword with the big middle on Mecca cigarettes" (247). This image of a sharp weapon is repeated when David notices the "sickle wings" (247) of the seagulls. In two successive images his mind is attracted to blades, a possible symbol of violence. He sees these despite the general peacefulness of his surroundings. This is a sort of foreshadowing of the zinc sword to come, but is also an echo of David's awareness of violence in his home, an awareness he is able to grasp from a physical vision. This is reflected by a cloud, which "sheared the sunlight from the wharf," and the wind, which "sharpened" (247). Besides these blades,

David is also conscious of darkness. Despite the light on the water, he notices, "Pale laths grew grey, turned dusky, contracted and in the swimming dimness, he saw sparse teeth that gnawed upon a lip" (247). He senses his own fears and uneasiness in this vision. He notices this when he thinks of the river water: "And beneath them, secret, unseen, and always faintly sinister, the tireless lipping of water among the piles" (247). Where Stephen closes his eyes against the waves, David listens and watches as his inner fears are reflected. This culminates in the image of the man on the tugboat. "In a doorway amidships, his back to the bright brass engine, stood a man in his undershirt, bare, outstretched arms gripping the doorpost on either side" (248). Just one chapter before David observes his father, who "stood darkly in the doorway" and whose "stretching arms pressed against both sides of the door-frame till it creaked" (241, 242). Each of the two chapters ends with this image of the aggressive man, standing in a position of power. What determines David's potential growth in his thought process is his ability to see something new in the man on the tugboat and, in the rest of his thoughts, find his own individual ideas amongst his fears. Because of this, he is more fully connected to the physical world and more capable of drawing conclusions about his identity from it.

The result of David's effort is a transformation of his identity, a movement away from the images Pankower and his father attempt to thrust upon him towards his own self-determination. In the novel's final chapters, David breaks from both the identity given to him by Pankower, though somewhat unsuccessfully, and more fully breaks from the identity given to him by both his parents. The first example of this is his resistance to the identity given him by RebSchulim and Reb Pankower after the incident with Esther in "The Rail." Pankower is displaying David's gift as a reader of Hebrew and David both pulls away from this projected identity and constructs his own new identity in the form of storytelling. This is not a complete transformation for David

because the story he tells is influenced by the identity his father has placed upon him, as David determined through the beating and from his information in "The Picture." It is, however, a new expression of self assertion against Pankower's words, "my David" (366). The completion of this attempt follows David's electrocution as he achieves a more balanced relationship with his parents upon returning home. David's use of his father's milk ladle as the destructive force in his electrocution severs the absorption he had previously experienced. In the final chapter he is separate from both parents, moving close to his mother only because the part of the bed where she sits is cooler. He establishes himself as a separate individual. He feels for his father "A vague, remote pity" (440). His last observation is of "not pain, not terror, but strangest triumph, strangest acquiescence" (441). David feels this while thinking about all the different shoes he witnessed in the street, and thus he draws from his chaotic and mixed surroundings the solidity of his own identity. It is only when his internal renewal through storytelling is coupled with the physical world's act of electrocution that David achieves self-determination.

The redefinition of identity that takes place within the individuals of the two novels based on their interactions with literature becomes a complex series of obstacles as these identities interact with the physical world. Naomi Diamant comments on internal and external worlds: "In a disjunction between imagination and actuality, the literal meaning wins out" (Diamant 348). Regardless of whether or not this is true, the meaning that "wins out" is not as significant to the process of self-determination as each individual's perception of the battle. The complexity arises from both the acting of the world upon the individuals and the effects of the individuals' perceptions of the world. Bloom's waves of struggle in "Circe" and David's gradual climb throughout *Call It Sleep* result in moments of self assertion, even if those moments are only acknowledged internally by each character. Stephen's anticlimactic attempt to interact with the

physical world by overcoming it completely and separating himself from it results in his gradual disappearance from the novel. In the cases of every character the result of the battle is a uniquely fluid and conflicted battlefield where the barriers of the internal and external are porous and complex.

III. Interweaving of Identities: Social and Intimate Relationships

The relationship between identity and the physical world constructed by each novel is further complicated by the relationship between one identity and another. Joyce observes this relationship through the constellations seen by Stephen and Bloom as they stand outside and look at the night sky in "Ithaca." They see "various degrees of vitality," "degrees of brilliancy," "the condensation of spiral nebulae into suns: the interdependent gyrations of double suns . . . the almost infinite compressibility of hirsute comets and their vast elliptical egressive and reentrant orbits from perihelion to aphelion," and so forth (17.1104-1136). The bodies of the universe are much like the bodies of Dublin and New York in the two novels, which—whether by order or by chaos—clash, mold, and flow together in an infinite number of ways. Each interaction has in common a distinct lack of perfection. On some level, Bloom wants to be the perfect father figure of Stephen and for Stephen to be the perfect image of his son. In *Call It Sleep,* Pankower wants David to be his perfect pupil, and Albert seeks the perfect oedipal image in David of illegitimacy and violence. Bloom is Rudy's father, however, and Stephen is Simon's son. David rejects the vision of the chosen one of the *heder,* and cannot biologically separate himself from Albert, his true father, despite the stories they construct.

With constantly shifting identities there are constantly shifting relationships, and there can be no perfection, no perfect union, but rather there are "the attendant phenomena of eclipses. . .from immersion to emersion, abatement of wind, transit of shadow, taciturnity of winged creatures. . .obscurity of terrestrial waters, pallor of human beings" (17.1132-1136). Constant movement, immersion and emersion, and obscurity defines the relationships. Stephen faces this fluidity with resistance, narcissistically seeking only his reflection in the people he encounters. Bloom also resists but experiences a balance between his narcissism and empathy and despite his

conflicts he asserts himself in his social setting and in his home. David has the added struggle that his status as a child restricts his authority in each of his relationships, but despite this, and despite the overwhelming influence of other individuals' identities upon his, David triumphs, if only in his mind. No two characters achieve a perfect relationship but Stephen, Bloom and David each have the opportunity to achieve self-determination despite this.

Stephen seeks interaction with other individuals in society only when he perceives their identities as relevant to him. He is consumed by his image as a writer and narcissistically looks for only the reflection of that image in the identities of others. In "Proteus," Stephen separates himself from society and goes to the beach to be alone with his thoughts. He imagines there what people might have thought of his writing: "Have you read his F? O yes, but I prefer Q. Yes, but W is wonderful. O yes, W" (3.139-140).Stephen is more concerned here with constructing mirrors that don't exist than interacting with the humans who do. This is the approach Stephen brings to the discussion in "Scylla and Charybdis," seeking validation from literary figures. As Stephen encounters opportunities to interact fluidly with other individuals, their identities influencing his, throughout his odyssey his response remains the same and he ends the novel in uncertainty and solitude.

One example of Stephen's narcissism and a lost opportunity to learn from another person with another identity is his relationship with Buck Mulligan. Mulligan both exists in Stephen's social world and offers commentary on Stephen's identity within that social world throughout the novel. He is a symbol of the church in "Telemachus," with "*Introibo ad altare Dei*" (1.5), as he imitates the Catholic mass. This is one way he represents Dublin society and culture. He is the source of Stephen's wandering as he takes the key from Stephen, and Stephen thinks, "I will not sleep here tonight" (1.739-740). "Here" refers to Martello tower, Mulligan's home and a single

solid object counter to the swirling whirlpool of Stephen's movement and thoughts. Stephen is aware of Mulligan's mockery as a kind of criticism. He responds to the memory of Mulligan's words at his mother's death, "*beastly dead,*" calling it "the offense to me" (1.198-199, 1.220). This is a glimpse of Stephen's narcissism as his emotions take precedence over his mother's death. Mulligan mocks Stephen's name, saying, "The mockery of it. . . . Your absurd name, an ancient Greek" (1.34). When Stephen is absent in "Wandering Rocks," Mulligan specifically targets Stephen's identity as a writer in his criticism. "He will never capture the Attic note. . . . That is his tragedy. He can never be a poet. The joy of creation" (10.1072-1075). Stephen gathers from this criticism that he lacks a place in Dublin society, treating the criticism only as a mirror for his failures. His lack of empathy for Mulligan's perspective limits his interpretation of Mulligan's criticism and thus he misses the opportunity to learn more about his social identity.

Stephen fails to comprehend in his conflict with Mulligan a better understanding of his own identity. Stephen's identity as a writer is intertwined with his social relationships. When Mulligan talks about Stephen, in Stephen's absence in "Wandering Rocks," he talks of Stephen's writing. When he joins Stephen in the library in "Scylla and Charybdis," he writes a play and shows it to Stephen. Much of this is mockery, for Mulligan doubts Stephen's abilities as a writer, but recognizes that identity and its flaws. He interests himself more in Stephen's failures than his successes, commenting at the end of "Scylla and Charybdis" after Stephen has attempted to enter the literary world through the discussion in the library, "O, the night in the Camden hall when the daughters of Erin had to lift their skirts to step over you as you lay in your mulberrycoloured, multicoloured, multitudinous vomit" (9.1192-1194). Though his interest is negative, Mulligan sees Stephen's situation more accurately than Stephen. He even recognizes more accurately than anyone else the reason for Stephen's failure as a writer when he remarks, "The joy of creation"

(10.1074-1075). There is no joy in creation for Stephen. He does not laugh at Mulligan's jokes, at his own errors, his portals of discovery but rather berates himself. Whereas interacting with Mulligan might shed this light on his predicaments, Stephen ignores this opportunity and continues to see Mulligan as only a shallow mirror.

Stephen's forced distance from other individuals serves as an obstacle in his search for self-determination, especially concerning his role in his family. Just as Mulligan shows Stephen's lack of empathy in the social world, Stephen's sister, Dilly, shows Stephen's lack of empathy in his family. Dilly finds Stephen in "Wandering Rocks," browsing book carts for some of his old books while she is buying a French primer. Her greeting to Stephen lacks emotion, the simple question, "What are you doing here, Stephen?" (10.854). Stephen blanches at the encounter, thinking "Show no surprise. Quite natural" (871). He must force this reaction, unable to interact naturally with his sister. The conversation is brief and limited despite the opportunity for the two to bond over their common interest in furthering their education. The narration turns inward to Stephen's thoughts. "She is drowning," he thinks. "Agenbite. Save her. Agenbite. All against us. She will drown me with her, eyes and hair" (10.875-876). Stephen's observation of his family is both negative and limited. He expresses the belief here that to be with Dilly, rather than rejecting her, is to drown with her. The idea of drowning comes from the Dedaluses' poverty as Dilly tells Stephen when he asks if they sold his books, "Some. . . . We had to" (10.874). In his perception of his role in his family, Stephen believes he can be either a savior to them or he will drown with them. His lack of empathy for Dilly, his inability to see her as a separate individual, shows the discrepancy between his approach to his family and hers.

Stephen's failure here is shown in the qualities of Dilly's identity he fails to acknowledge. These qualities are shown in the exchange that happens before Stephen's section

of "Wandering Rocks." She finds Mr Simon Dedalus on the street, and he tells her, "Stand up straight for the love of the lord Jesus" (10.657), but cannot respond to the question, "Did you get any money?" (10.668). Dilly is insistent. She does not respond to her father's cries, including "An insolent pack of little bitches since your poor mother died. . . . Low blackguardism! I'm going to get rid of you" (10.682-684) and "Curse your bloody blatant soul" (10.690). Dilly continues to demand responsibility of her father, to be given money that she knows he will later spend on alcohol, saying "I'm sure you have another shilling" (10.711). Such boldness is not seen in Stephen. She presents an insistent strength here that Stephen lacks. Stephen, in his limited and narcissistic approach, sees no hope for her future or his if he remains with her. What he doesn't see in such a focus is the strength of identity presented to him. He treats Dilly like another starving Dubliner and refuses to feel empathy for her and thus to benefit from interacting with her. He narcissistically sees his own failure in Paris in her attempt to learn French, with no empathy towards Dilly's potentiality for a future. His weak approach to interaction again limits his concept of his own identity.

Stephen's greatest opportunity to achieve self-determination through finding harmony in his relationships, despite conflict, and his greatest failure comes from the constant presence of his mother's ghost. Much of her presence is derived from guilt as Mulligan reveals in "Telemachus": "You wouldn't kneel down to pray for your mother on her deathbed when she asked you" (1.207-208). Her presence is hidden throughout the novel as Stephen attempts to push her out of his mind. She may appear in "Proteus," as Stephen thinks, "She trusts me, her hand gentle…. She, she, she. What she?" (3.424-426), and possibly the reason Stephen identifies with the ghost of Hamlet's father in "Scylla and Charybdis." What he thinks or feels in his memories of his mother is unclear, for Stephen doesn't explore them. Stephen must face his guilt

in “Circe,” when he evokes his mother’s ghost with his cry, “Dance of death” (15.4139). Stephen attempts to shield himself from his mother: “They say I killed you, mother. He offended your memory. Cancer did it, not I. Destiny” (15.4186-4187). Stephen’s responses to his mother’s cries are consistently defensive with “The ghoul! Hyena!”(15.4200) and “Shite!” (15.4223). His mother’s ghost cries out to him, “Years and years I loved you, O, my son, my firstborn, when you lay in my womb” (15.4203-4204), and when she lifts “*her blackened withered right arm*” (15.4218) it transforms into “*A green crab with malignant red eyes*” (15.4220) upon reaching Stephen. The reminder of her love transforms into threats, and her cry of “Save him from hell, O Divine Sacred Heart!” is met with Stephen’s, “I’ll bring you all to heel!” (15.4233-4236). Stephen meets her love with his violence as “*Nothung*” transforms his ashplant into a weapon (15.4242). In the form of his mother, Stephen sees the reflection of his fear of hell, and the inevitability of death. He has no empathy for her perspective. Their interaction is disabled as a wall of violence forms between Stephen and his mother, causing him to fall into the form of a crumpled drunk at the end of “Circe,” any semblance to an artist vanishing with the ghost.

Bloom has a very different approach to social situations as seen in the parallel of “Proteus” and “Hades,” two episodes that occur simultaneously, one of which follows Stephen’s descent into solitude, the other which reveals Bloom’s attempts to find his place among his peers as he rides in a carriage with Martin Cunningham, Mr Power, and Simon Dedalus. Bloom’s lack of social authority shows in the beginning of the episode as Martin asks “Are we all here now?” before Bloom is present, then saying, “Come along, Bloom” (6.8). Bloom is excluded from “we all,” an exclusion that is consistent throughout the episode. After the funeral Bloom observes the crushed hat of John Henry Menton, saying “Your hat is a little crushed” (6.1018). The comment is ignored until Martin Cunningham “helped, pointing also” (6.1020). In “Aeolus,” Bloom’s lack

of authority in society continues as he is physically disruptive: “The doorknob hit Mr Bloom in the small of the back as the door was pushed in” (7.280-1). He attempts to remind Hynes that Hynes owes him money but his hint goes unnoticed. This lack of social presence is accentuated by the recurring figure of Blazes Boylan. In “Hades” Bloom “reviewed the nails of his left hand, then those of his right hand” (6.200-201) when Boylan appears. He searches his pockets in “Lestrygonians” to avoid crossing Boylan’s path. Boylan shows Bloom’s inability to assert himself in his relationships, not only disrupting his place in society but taking his place in Bloom’s household. Unlike Stephen, Bloom wishes to find a place in society, and though he continues to lack authority, he is able to assert his identity despite the antagonistic efforts of others.

A moment of success in Bloom’s self-determination occurs at the end of “Cyclops,” after he has been attacked and berated by the unnamed narrator and the citizen. In this episode, Bloom most fully asserts his identity, though his efforts go unnoticed by his attackers. When Bloom says of his own nationality, “I was born here. Ireland,” the response of the citizen is one of physical repulsion: “The citizen said nothing only cleared the spit out of his gullet and, gob, he spat a Red bank oyster out of him right in the corner” (12.1431-1433). Bloom puts forth his own moral theory: “Force, hatred, history, all that. That’s not life for men and women, insult and hatred. And everybody knows that it’s the very opposite of that that is really life. . . . Love, says Bloom. I mean the opposite of hatred” (12.1481-1485). Bloom’s response is mocked by the citizen and the Cyclops, who disagree with him. He is also mocked by the interpolating narrator, with the satire of “Love loves to love love” (12.1493). His social position is still that of an outsider, especially because of his Jewish heritage, and he lacks any authority.

At the end of "Cyclops," Bloom still fails to attain any social authority but he achieves self-determination despite this. After Bloom makes the argument that Christ was a Jew like him and the citizen decides to attack him physically, the narrator interpolates:

> When, lo, there came about them all a great brightness and they beheld the chariot wherein He stood ascend to heaven. . . . And they beheld Him even Him, ben Bloom Elijah, amid clouds of angels ascend to the glory of the brightness at an angle of fortyfive degrees over Donohoe's in Little Green street like a shot off a shovel. (12.1910-1918)

The narrator mocks Bloom's Jewish heritage with this description, while the Cyclops attempts to reduce this ascension to "a shot off a shovel," but both mockeries are irrelevant because Bloom is physically above them. Bloom has asserted his identity, establishing a moral position, though he has failed to achieve social standing with that identity. Where Bloom's social attempt fails, he is taken above the situation. This climax shows Bloom's achievement most explicitly through the metaphor of physical ascension, but he succeeds more subtly other times in the text as well, including his ascension over the conflict with Blazes Boylan in "Ithaca."

Bloom's marriage is troubled by the infidelity of his wife, providing an opportunity for Bloom to assert his identity. As he reflects on this event in "Ithaca" he experiences "Envy, jealousy, abnegation, equanimity" (17.2155). Bloom considers various forms of "retribution" (17.2200), but rejects a violent reaction. The complex movement of Bloom's thoughts is countered by the simple action of returning to bed. The actions of Boylan and Molly have been reduced by Bloom's contemplation of the universe as a whole, and the final response to the narrator's question, "By what reflections did he, a conscious reactor against the void of incertitude, justify to himself his sentiments?" (17.2210-2211) is "the apathy of the stars"

(17.2226). He has been cuckolded by Boylan and his most significant social relationship, that with his wife, has been undermined yet Bloom does not succumb to emotional chaos. Just as he rises over his social standing in "Cyclops," not seeking authority but accepting that the validity of his identity is not dependent on the authority of others, so does he not lose his identity in the face of "the imprint of a human form, male, not his" (17.2125) in his bed. He examines Molly's identity through the contemplation of her lovers and finds that he does not need to eliminate the conflict that is present in their marriage in order to return to their marriage bed.

Joyce constructs the simple, ideal conflict and resolution of two identities from Stephen and Bloom, a son without a father and a father without a son. Father and son are not simple identities, however, but rather fluid pieces of the composition of the two individuals and rather than fitting perfectly together in "Ithaca," their union fails. Though they are "centripetal" and "centrifugal" (17.1214), Stephen wanders off in the middle of the episode and leaves Bloom alone. Stephen's future is uncertain, and where he will go and whether he will succeed as a writer is ambiguous. Meanwhile the novel's climax, its ending, turns to the relationship between Molly and Bloom. The imperfection and fluid nature of Stephen's and Bloom's identities are clearest here. Stephen may be the son without a father, but it's his relationship with his mother that is more significant. Bloom may be the father without a son, but it's his marriage to Molly that is actually in conflict. Their identities cannot be fully compatible because they are composed of so many different moving parts that even if they fit together in one place, they fall apart somewhere else. Stephen cannot make Bloom return to his bed. Bloom cannot make Stephen remain in his house. They can only influence each other when and where their paths cross. Bloom understands this as he returns to Molly, but Stephen is faceless and voiceless, a figure moving away in the dark.

For David, in *Call It Sleep*, human relationships are almost always a source of anxiety and even oppression. Whether it is the dictatorship of his home, ruled by his father, or the anarchy of the streets, full of the chaos and violence of David's peers, David struggles to achieve self-determination and to avoid being absorbed into the identities the worlds thrust upon him. Many of the social identities in the world around David fall into two major categories. There are those individuals who still identify as European immigrants, whose minds remain in the old world and who are critical of America and Americans, and there are those who belong to the new American society. Language is a major part of this division, as Hana Wirth-Nesher acknowledges in *Call It English*: "Yiddish serves him at home, English assaults him on the street, and Hebrew and Aramaic beckon to him as mysterious languages, sacred tongues that represent mystical power" (Wirth-Nesher 80). Thus the worlds within *Call It Sleep* are divided by language. As David moves back and forth between these two worlds, communicating in both languages and thinking in both languages, he moves towards independence in his endeavors and an understanding of his fluid identity that has if not authority at least personal validation.

David's first and primary interaction with other individuals is with his parents in his home, and through this interaction he first faces a conflict in establishing his identity as separate from theirs. Albert's violence is a clear threat, the fearfulness and clinginess of Genya is also a source of conflict for David. David is aware of his mother's fearfulness. Genya seems unaware of the effect of her behavior on David. After Luter attempts briefly to seduce her in "The Cellar," Genya comments on his behavior, saying, "All are called men," then asking David, "Are you worried about anything?" (45). David is worried about Genya's distrust of Luter and Genya is unaware. David imitates her state of fear. He is aware of Genya's separation from the outside world: "On coming around the corner of Avenue D that afternoon, David spied his mother

walking. . . . It was as though the street's shifting intricacy had flowered into the simple steadiness of her presence" (171). The duality of these two worlds becomes the source of an emotional crisis for David when the outside world imposes on his home in the form of a group of boys glimpsing Genya while she bathes. David is furious, as much at Genya as at the boys, thinking "Why did she let them look" (295). He is disturbed by the exposure of the intimacy he experiences in his home and in his relationship with his mother. It is at this point that he begins to separate his identity from hers, and rather than running home after the boys' confession, David runs to the roof. Like Bloom, who ascends over his transgressors, David moves upward physically, above both the world of the street and the world of his home, achieving not authority but autonomy. He thinks, "Alone. . . . Ain't so scared" (296). The word "Ain't" is an English slang term, derived from the union of English and Yiddish, and David's use of it here shows that he is most likely thinking in English rather than Yiddish. His separation from Genya is also a separation from an identity dominated by its immigrant status.

Despite this separation from his identity in the home, David does not fully identify with the world of the street either. Gathered in the street after glimpsing Genya in the bath, David's peers join together to tell stories and in doing so show their street identity through hierarchy. Protesting the presence of a few six year olds, the older boys shoo them with the comment, "Street ain' yours" (292). When one person rises from the group, "Immediately all buttocks crammed together, squeezing him out of his seat. Returned, he flung himself between the packed usurpers" (293). This competition is a reflection of the new American identity sought by the boys. In this chaos, David is "Stranded," and "hesitantly approached and stood up behind them" (291). David lacks a place in the group. His role in the *heder* gives some insight into this. When Pankower searches for a student to recite the *had gadya*, he turns to David. "'I know it,' he

confessed, but the same time feigned sullenness lest he stir the hatred of the others" (233). The culture in the street is hostile to David's alertness to religion and intelligence. Pankower is aware of this duality and in chapter 16 of "The Rail," as Roth enters Pankower's mind, he asks, "What was going to become of Yiddish youth? What would become of this new breed? These Americans?" (374). Pankower equates "Yiddish" with a national identity here and observes the conflict between Yiddish and American. This conflict is present in the culture and though David observes it he does not choose a side. Just as he thinks in both Yiddish and English while reveling in the reading of Hebrew, David rejects the limitations caused by full absorption into one culture or another. He lacks the carelessness or violence of the people in the street. He observes their games but does not always take part. They lack the religious identity that he seeks, though he identifies more with their nationality.

When David first meets Leo he feels he has found a balance. Leo is separate from the restricted world of New York Jews that David has lived in thus far. Religion is the connection lacking from David's interaction with the boys in the street and it is present in Leo, though David isn't yet sure how. David observes, "[Leo] wore something about his neck that made him almost god-like" (305). The religious symbols are also associated with Leo's freedom, and David makes the unintentional pun, "Yuh god a key of yuh own'n' ev'yt'ing?" (318), acknowledging the connection between holiness, "god," and freedom, the key. David connects the religious imagery in Leo's home to his own notions of God and holiness, especially the idea of light. Like Bloom—whose identity is evoked by the name of David's new friend—David has a practical approach to the symbols, focused on their role in the physical world, but to a greater degree as he imagines they have physical power. When David sees the picture of Jesus and the sacred heart he observes, "He's all light inside," and Leo explains, "Well'at's'cause he's so holy" (322). It isn't

until Leo's betrayal that David is able to break these associations. David gains the crucifix by leading Leo to Esther, but his associations mix when filth and sexuality are the source of cleanliness and the religious amulet. When the crucifix resurfaces in the final fight between David, Genya, and Albert, the new associations are there with it: "Horror magnified the figure on it" (402). The difficulty here comes from David's inability to interact with another person without absorbing that person's identity. David seeks Leo's freedom, but rather than comprehending that freedom as a piece of Leo's identity, he attempts to absorb Leo's full identity. He does this primarily by asking for the crucifix, a physical marker of identity, and even goes against all his own reservations to get it, leading Leo to Esther in an act he thinks of as sinful. Seeing the beads in the final fight with his father David is able to acknowledge this, to see their lack of worth and separate the signifier and the signified. Just as he breaks away from Pankower's projected identity of a traditional Jew, supported by the image of his mother, David breaks away from the separate identity of Leo, and the image of a new American. He is almost an individual and the only conflict left to resolve is David's conflict with his father.

Just as David is absorbed into his father's perspective in the initial beating, the first climax in the conflict between them, he is absorbed into his father's projected identity in their final fight. As the adults argue around him after David has made his confession to Pankower of his bastard identity, David reacts: "Blind with terror, unnoticed by any, David had already reeled toward the stove. (*—It's there! It's there!*) A tortured, anguished voice babbled within him" (399). David is trying to reach his father's broken whip, a symbol of violence that was destroyed in the beating of two thieves. This reinforces the self-destruction David sought in being beaten by Albert as he now seeks his own punishment. Albert recognizes this, saying "Is it your fate you're begging for?" (400). Though he escapes from Albert with the help of Genya and Bertha,

David is still paralyzed by his accusations. In the street, he "stood there, stood there" (403), unable to make a decision until he remembers the light in the rail. David's return to the rail to electrocute himself signifies not only his break from the identity projected upon him by his father, but his harmony with the social world as a whole.

David's resolution does not happen in isolation but is intertwined with individuals and groups in the neighborhood around him. As the novel approaches its final climax, David's expansion into the world is reflected by the narration, which moves out of David's mind for the first time in chapter 16 of "The Rail," and into Pankower's. In chapter 18, the perspective is Bertha's and Nathan's, though the characters aren't identified by name and are rather called "the slight, long-nosed owner of the store" and "his slovenly, red-haired wife" (380). They are no longer the specific identities seen by David but individuals in a greater context. After the explosive fight with Albert, which includes the accusation of David as a bastard, the projected identity, David runs out to the street where it is dusk and he is aware of the voices of other people. The narration weaves in and out of David's mind, first with dialogue in chapter 20, then more explicitly with divided scenes in chapter 21, a visual separation of the inner and outer worlds. Roth narrates the experiences of "Bill Whitney, an old man with a massive body, short-wind and stiff, rheumatic legs" (409), along with a group of people nearby in "Callahan's beer-saloon" (410). During this narration, David's experience is interjected in a form notable for its almost verse-like lack of the grammar and punctuation typical of the narration of physical events. Separately, Roth approaches the external social world and David's internal world, and conveys the event of electrocution. Each division grows shorter as sentences and even words are interrupted to splice the two scenes together: "*He drew* / "It's the snug ones who'll preach it wuzto be." / *back, straightened. Carefully bal—* / "So I dropped it in when he was dancin'—O

hee! Hee! Mimi! A healthy dose I—" / *anced on his left, advance*" (417). The glimpse of the words "dropped it in" predicts David's act of dropping the ladle into the crack to reach the rail. Upon David's thought "*lifted*" a distant characters says, "An' I picks up a rivet in de tongs" (418). The narrations are not only blending grammatically but in content. David is unknowingly coming together with this separate social world and doing so through his own independent actions rather than emulating a projected identity. After the moment of electrocution the position of the dialogue on the page is disrupted and much like David's thoughts before being knocked unconscious becomes scattered and random. The two scenes are joined together in chaos. As David slowly regains consciousness the images associated with his fearful projected identities move through his mind, including "*yellow birds flew to the roof*" (425), birds like the canary that led to the clash between the street boys and Genya, and "*A hammer! A hammer!*"(426), the symbol of his father's violence. Voices interrupt these thoughts increasingly until the internal sounds come together with the external sounds in the form of "Whistle, mister! WHISTLE" (431), David's first thoughts that are not in italics as their form comes together with the form of the external narration.

The final new voice in the novel, the voice that conveys the conclusion of David's identity search in this social environment, is that of the interne who revives him. He is the first to speak to David after the electrocution and is described as having a "reassuring drawl" (431) and a "routine, solicitous voice" (432). The interne is speaking English and is the only character to speak it without a strong accent. He lacks the mark of his European history, and is distinguished not by his voice but by his occupation and actions, decisions within his control. This is the figure that returns David to his home. Upon David's return his father's violence has subsided and David is immune to his mother's clinging. He has a new sense of autonomy. David does not have

authority in his home, and his parents may still be conflicted, but he has a sense of knowing who he is despite these things. He has reached a healthy place in his relationship with his parents, if only in his perspective, and has a better concept of his place in American society as a whole.

At first glance, the two father-son relationships that appear in these novels, those of Stephen and Bloom and David and Albert, may seem like the "double suns" witnessed in "Ithaca." They are never fully united but constantly circle each other, interdependent, on a single common center of mass. For Stephen and Bloom this center is the loss of father and son, for David and Albert it is the false conviction of Genya's infidelity. These perfect portraits of two relationships are destroyed, however, as Stephen leaves Bloom and the novel in "Ithaca," and Bloom returns to his marriage bed, as Albert admits defeat and David learns forgiveness. In *Ulysses*, the double suns separate completely, and in *Call It Sleep* they unite. The writers refuse to create well balanced relationships with simple united endings, for in the case of the fluid identities of those involved, such relationships are impossible. However, despite any lack of submission on the part of Stephen, Bloom has found assertion of his own identity, and self-determination. Despite any violent regression that may come from Albert, David has chosen his individual path.

Conclusion

In "The Study of Languages," Joyce examines the relationship between language and the world: "First, in the history of words there is much that indicates the history of men, and in comparing the speech of to-day with that of years ago, we have a useful illustration of the effect of external influences on the very words of a race" (Joyce 15). This observation concerns more directly language as a whole, spoken and written, but applies also to the language that constructs *Ulysses* and *Call It Sleep*. Ira B. Nadel also takes interest in "the history of men" and its relationship with *Ulysses*, but shows little concern for the language that serves as a bond between the cultural identity within the novel and the history outside of it. Joyce shows in his essay the interdependent and interwoven relationship between "external influences" and "the words of a race," a relationship critical in understanding both his and Roth's novels.

Through a narratological lens, the construction of identity in each character's story is much like the construction of the story itself. Identity is not merely based on the role within the family, the labels of father and son, or on the role within society, the labels of Irishman, American, or nationalist. It is not strictly religious, not Jewish or Catholic. Identity is all of these things, and for each character the qualities that identity consists of change with every experience and in every context. Though any given approach to the novels—new historical, autobiographical, cultural—requires focus on a certain identity, that certain identity must be accepted as fluid and only one of a multiple of perspectives on that character lest the criticism face limitations that Joyce and Roth refuse.

Joyce and Roth each weave identity into their literature, and create literature from identity. Through his examination of *Hamlet*, Stephen is able to examine himself, his work, and his artistic identity as thoroughly as David is able to examine his cultural and moral identity

through the images of Isaiah. Through *Sweets of Sin*, Bloom is briefly able to reflect on a piece of his identity. The image of Penelope is most appropriate, for the woven image is not static for any of these characters, and rather they are consistently woven and unwoven as self-discovery and internal analysis creates a continuously flowing image. Equally as important as the literature that exists in each character's life is the literature that acts upon them. The literary construction of Dublin and New York challenges the writers and characters to weave the identities into a fictional physical world and to achieve self-determination despite the conflicts within that world. Without this self-determination each character faces complex and troubling social and intimate relationships, and the threat of being overcome by both other characters and the narration of the story as a whole.

Upon confessing to Pankower that he is a bastard, telling the story invented by his father, David runs screaming into the street with a cry of, "Ain't I ain't! Ain't I. . . . I'm sommbody else. I'm somebody else—*else*—ELSE! Dot's who I am" (371). As Stephen attempts to internally justify not paying money he owes to an acquaintance, he thinks, "Molecules all change. I am other I now. Other I got pound" (9.205-206). In thinking of his past self, reflecting on a moment with Molly, Bloom thinks, "Me. And me now" (8.917). Each of these observations made by the characters is an observation of their consciousness, their awareness of an individual self, but is also an observation of identity. David distinguishes his mind not only from the minds of people around him but also from the projection of what his elders believe his mind should be. Stephen separates himself according to a shallow purpose, using his philosophy of identity for nothing more than avoiding a debt. Bloom attempts to understand the transformation he has undergone and the transformation in his relationship as a result. In these ways, these particular moments of internal exploration reveal the role of identity for each hero of the two novels. The end result for

David is wild self-assertion first through his screams and finally through electrocution. For Bloom, the end result is also self-assertion, though subtle, as he unites "Me" and "me now" by returning to his wife, the source of the memory. Stephen never quite makes the connection. The fluidity of his physical body through movement of molecules and the fluidity of his internal self through a complexly composed identity is no more useful to him than the money for a debt. His failure shows most clearly the necessity of fully understanding the nature of identity in order to live without limitations and thrive in the chaos of Joyce's and Roth's worlds.

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